(c) to (f) The guidelines are generally followed for allotment of guest house accommodation. No person has stayed in the guest house for years at a stretch.

Passport Application

181. SHRI A.C. JOS :
SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications pending with various passport offices in Kerala for the issue of passport during the period of 1st January, 1997 to October 31st, 1997;

(b) if so, the reasons for delay; and

(c) the action taken by the Government to clear these pending application?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI): (a) A tabular statement is enclosed.

(b) Delay in issue of passports is normally due to reasons such as receipt of negative or incomplete reports from concerned police authorities, discrepancies in documents submitted by applicants particularly in respect of applications received by post, lack of response from applicants who are asked to submit additional documents.

(c) The government monitors the performance of Passport Offices on weekly basis with a view to clearing backlog of passport applications. Some of the steps taken in this direction are: (i) Close and regular coordination with concerned police authorities in those cases where the backlog has accumulated due to incomplete reports; (ii) sending periodic reminders to applicants to meet the deficiencies in their application forms and to submit additional documents wherever required with a view to clearing backlog on this account; (iii) augmentation of staff strength to reduce and clear pendencies; (iv) upgradation of office facilities including computerisation leading to faster screening and processing applications; (v) review of systems and procedures in order to avoid delays which results in the creation of backlog; (vi) increasing the size and validity period of passport; (vii) expansion of list of officers authorised to sign Verification Centificates; (viii) regular inspection of Passport Offices by officers of the CPV Division with the specific aim of ensuring clearance of backlog and necessary follow-up action; and (ix) setting up of Public Grievances Redressal Cell directly under the supervision of the Chief Passport Officer to monitor public grievances.

STATEMENT

Number of passport applications pending in Passport Offices in Kerala as on 31.10.1997

S.No.	Office	Total Pendency	Pending over a month
1.	Cochin	9948	2022
2.	Kozhikode	24337	11764
3.	Trivandrum	10644	3095

Manpower Exporting Agencies

182. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that a large number of manpower exporting agencies are working in the country illegally;

(b) if so, the measures adopted by the Government to curb/control the activities of such agencies;

(c) whether any study has been conducted by the Government to determine the number of persons stranded in various Gulf Countries due to lack of proper documents papers; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government to repatriate these Indian Nationals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) and (b) It has come to the notice of the Government that some agencies are involved in illegal export of manpower. The Emigration Act, 1983 contains adequate legal and penal provisions to curb/control the activities of such agencies. All offences under this Act are congnizable. The State Governments and the police authorities are urged from time to time to take necessary action against the unscrupulous recruiting agents. It is only recently that cases against 32 such agensts were registered in the State of Rajasthan.

(c) and (d) The Indian Missions abroad maintain the information regarding stranded workers in the various Gulf countries. In the event of any worker being stranded abroad, the concerned Indian Embassies and Consulates provided every possible assistance to the Indian emigrants including providing shelter to the workers and their repatriation to India.

Gas Based Power Plants in Rajasthan

183. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of gas based power plants in Rajasthan at present;